

ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
INDIANA COMMISSION ON AUTISM



Indiana Legislative Services Agency
200 W. Washington Street, Suite 301
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

November, 2011

INDIANA LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

2011

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Staff

Francine Rowley-Lacy
Attorney for the Commission

Chris Baker
Fiscal Analyst for the Commission

A copy of this report is available on the Internet. Reports, minutes, and notices are organized by committee. This report and other documents for this Committee can be accessed from the General Assembly Homepage at <http://www.state.in.us/legislative/>.

I. STATUTORY AND LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL DIRECTIVES

The Indiana General Assembly enacted legislation (IC 12-11-7) directing the Commission to do the following:

- (1) Study the service delivery system for individuals with autism and the families of individuals with autism, including the following:
 - (A) An analysis of the number of Indiana citizens believed to have autism.
 - (B) Funding amounts and sources.
 - (C) Types of expenditures and services provided.
 - (D) The number of clients served.
 - (E) Relationships among agencies and organizations.
 - (F) Residential options for individuals with autism.
- (2) Study the need and effectiveness of programs for individuals with autism.
- (3) Oversee and update the development of a comprehensive plan for services for individuals of all ages with autism.

The Legislative Council did not assign any specific topics to the Commission for the 2011 interim.

II. SUMMARY OF WORK PROGRAM

The Commission met 2 times during the interim, on September 13 and October 24, 2011.

Details concerning the Commission's proceedings are available in the Commission's minutes, which can be accessed from the General Assembly website at: <http://www.in.gov/legislative/>

III. SUMMARY OF TESTIMONY

The Commission received testimony at the two meetings concerning the following:

- (1) An update from the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA), Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services (DDRS), on:
 - (A) The five core objectives for FSSA for the next fiscal year, as follows:
 - (i) Employment of individuals with developmental disorders, individuals with disabilities, and autism.
 - (ii) Systematic redesign.
 - (iii) Vocational rehabilitation streamlining and process improvement.
 - (iv) Bureau of Quality Improvement provider oversight.
 - (v) First Steps cost savings initiatives.
 - (B) The status of the service delivery system.

- (C) Waiting lists.
- (D) Funding and costs for services.
- (2) An overview from the Arc of Indiana concerning its activities and projects.
- (3) An update from the Autism Society of Indiana concerning the Indiana comprehensive plan on autism, including the relationships among agencies and organizations.
- (4) A summary of a research study that addressed the association between in utero exposure to antidepressant medications and increased risk of autism.
- (5) A description of the activities and projects of the Blumberg Center at Indiana State University and the Wabash Valley Autism Society.
- (6) An explanation from the Indiana Department of Education concerning the process by which schools receive funding for services provided to children with autism.
- (7) A description of current autism training available for first responders.
- (8) An overview from FSSA concerning its work to improve the waiting list process for Medicaid waivers, including the development of an electronic filing and maintenance system.
- (9) A description of several ongoing activities and projects in Indiana that focus on eliminating disproportionate care and services for individuals with autism based on geography.
- (10) An overview from FSSA concerning the status of adult group homes for individuals with autism.

IV. COMMITTEE FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Commission made the following recommendations (all recommendations were adopted by consent with nine members present):

- (1) The Commission recommends that legislation requiring training in autism for law enforcement and fire personnel based on the required autism training for emergency medical services personnel under IC 16-31-3 be considered for introduction in the 2012 General Assembly.
- (2) The Commission recommends that FSSA, in collaboration with the Arc of Indiana:
 - (A) develop an electronic filing system for autism waivers;
 - (B) improve the electronic management of accounts;
 - (C) based on a study of best practices from other states, determine whether placement on the autism waiting list should be need based or time based; and
 - (D) submit a status report on its actions concerning improvements made to the electronic filing and account management systems for autism waivers and placement on the autism waiver waiting list to the General Assembly by April 1, 2012.

- (3) The Commission recommends that First Steps continue to survey families and service providers to improve early interventions for individuals with autism.
- (4) The Commission recommends that a letter be drafted by Senator Waltz, Chairperson of the Indiana Commission on Autism, to the American Academy of Pediatrics Indiana Chapter, the Indiana State Medical Association, the Indiana Rural Health Association, and the Indiana Primary Health Care Association to facilitate improvement in early intervention for individuals with autism by encouraging continued education and training in autism for medical doctors.
- (5) The Commission recommends that FSSA survey advocacy groups, families, and service providers across the state of Indiana to determine:
 - (A) deficiencies in autism services;
 - (B) how services can be improved;
 - (C) types of group homes that may be beneficial for individuals with autism; and
 - (D) where group homes are needed in Indiana.

The Committee unanimously adopted its draft final report with nine members present and with the understanding that the actions taken during the Commission's October 24, 2011 meeting would also be included in the final report.

WITNESS LIST

Ann Davis, Director of Special Education, Indiana Department of Education

John Dickerson, Arc of Indiana

Kim Dodson, Arc of Indiana

Dawn Downer, First Steps

Julia Holloway, Director, DDRS, FSSA

Candace Joles, Blumberg Center at Indiana State University

Tracy Myszak, DDRS, FSSA

Michael O'Connor, Eli Lilly and Company

Dana Renay, Autism Society of Indiana

Mark Scherer, Indiana Fire Chiefs Association

Naomi Swiezy, Christian Sarkine Autism Treatment Center,